

## Storm Surge 10 March 2008

An exceptionally high spring tide combined with a southerly gale to produce a dramatic storm surge. See Hampshire's Changing Climate page 8. More pictures on the ERA website.



## Emsworth's Oysters

Emsworth Museum's first special exhibition for the 2008 season, which runs until 27 April, displays the initial results of a unique project that has been delving into our maritime heritage.

Oysters have been fished in our harbour for centuries, reaching its peak during the second half of the 19th century. At the height of the industry, almost five million oysters a year came out of Emsworth and

half the locally employed population earned their living from fishing and the industries that support it, such as boat building.

The oysters were mostly dredged from the seabed by large smacks which brought the oysters from far and wide into Emsworth harbour. They were then transferred to either the oyster pens on the foreshore, or a large structure called the Ark where they were cleaned and sorted.

The bubble burst when the Dean of Winchester died in 1902 and the blame was laid on polluted Emsworth oysters. Following inspection of the oyster beds, sewage contamination was confirmed and the sale of Emsworth oysters immediately slumped. Emsworth's prosperity went from boom to bust, and almost 400 locals lost their main livelihoods overnight.

The Emsworth Maritime and Historical Trust (EM&HT) and the Chichester District Archaeological Society (CDAS) have joined together for a unique study of the old oyster beds on the foreshore at Emsworth.

Using professional archaeological consultants from the Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology have been working with volunteers, and supported by partner organisations and support staff to survey the oyster pens on Emsworth's foreshore. Running in parallel, archivists from Emsworth Museum have been delving into the records held in Hampshire and West Sussex to help put the physical evidence discovered during the survey work on the foreshore into context. Funding for this project is through a grant from the Chichester Harbour Sustainable Development Fund.

Emsworth Museum, which is in North Street above the Fire Station, is open from Easter until the end of October. Saturdays and Bank Holidays from 10.30am to 4.30pm. On Fridays (August only) and Sundays from 2.30pm to 4.30pm. See page 10 for full list of events. John Tweddell

## First Local Nature Reserve in Emsworth



We've done it!! Brook Meadow is the first nature conservation area in Emsworth to have Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status. LNR status is declared by the local authority, in this case Havant Borough Council (HBC) with advice from Natural England. The LNR designation will give additional protection to Brook Meadow and ensure that this wildlife haven in the centre of Emsworth is conserved and managed as a valuable resource for the benefit of the community and future generations.

A down side to all this is that it has taken 4 years to reach this stage. Why so long? In a word, 'Bureaucracy'. Partly because Chichester District Council also had to give its authorisation as the eastern edges of Brook Meadow are in West Sussex, although the whole site is owned by HBC.

I am pleased to report that the declaration has now been officially signed and sealed, and announced in the Portsmouth News. A copy of the Declaration is available at HBC's Civic Offices and in Emsworth Library. Statutory undertakers such as the Environment Agency will be informed as well as the owners/users of the adjacent small industrial estate. A public notice of declaration has also been put in the signcases in Brook Meadow and in the ERA noticeboard outside the Co-Op. It will take some time before the official Local Nature Reserve signs go up - but we can wait.

See also page 8



Oyster fisherman with dredge

## Memorial Garden: The Concept in Creation

The many, many months of planning, preparation and fund-raising has now become a reality. On 28th January, the contractors moved in and the ensuing three weeks saw quite a transformation of the garden. Paths cut and created, paving laid, 50 tonnes of topsoil shipped in, turf laid, grass seeded, entrance columns built, seats and information boards installed. The 'Friends' then set to and have planted Beech and Rose hedging around the perimeter. By the time you read this, it is hoped that the raised bed will have been planted. Huge thanks go to those whose contributions, both financial and physical, have enabled the project to reach this stage.

See: Memorial Garden Events page 9

Brian Picknett



Path laying in Memorial Garden

## Emsworth Trees

### Emsworth Town Centre Tree Trail

Emsworth Tree Wardens have compiled a first ever Tree Trail for Emsworth



which takes you round the Town Centre. The Tree Trail boasts at least 25 different trees plus a native hedgerow all within easy walking distance of the town centre. The Trail is published as a booklet with lots of colour photos, drawings and watercolours (by Pam Picknett) and is on sale for only £1 at the Emsworth Bookshop, Bookends, Borland & Bound Estate Agents, Brookfield Hotel, Emsworth Museum and other outlets around the town. The proceeds from the sale of this booklet will be used to promote the trees of Emsworth.

There were 10 Willows along the eastern side of the Town Mill Pond until one of them (pictured above) was blown over in the storm on 10 March. This line of Willows was featured in the Tree Trail booklet. A quick bit of editing before the booklet was printed solved the problem. I have been informed that HBC will be planting a more wind firm tree as a replacement. See page 8 for more about Emsworth Trees.

Frances Jannaway



**Local Development Framework**

### Consultation

6301 new houses in Havant Borough, by 2026.

How many in Emsworth?

Where will they go?

How can you influence this?

See page 6.